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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/990,031	11/21/2001	Gopal B. Avinash	GEMS:0171 15-GS-6147	2749

7590 10/06/2005

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EXAMINER

LEE, TOMMY D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2624

DATE MAILED: 10/06/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/990,031

Applicant(s)

AVINASH, GOPAL B.

Examiner

Thomas D. Lee

Art Unit

2624

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-67 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18, 36-48 and 50-65 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 19-35, 49, 66 and 67 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f):
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/26/02.

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 19-35, 49, 66 and 67 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In base claim 19, "the dominant orientation" (part (c)) and "the homogenization" (part (d)) lack sufficient antecedent basis.

Claims 49 and 66 (claim 67 depends from claim 66) are *method* claims depending from *system* claims 48 and 50, respectively. It is unclear whether these claims are directed to a method or a system.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 1-18, 36-48 and 50-65 are allowed.
5. Claims 19-35, 49, 66 and 67 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

6. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: No prior art has been found to disclose or suggest steps of processing a shrunk image to reduce image noise "by selectively processing one of more selected regions of the shrunk image and differentially processing one or more non-selected regions of the shrunk image such that a processed image results," in combination with the steps of "expanding the processed image by the given factor to produce an expanded image," and "blending one or more selected regions of the expanded image with one or more corresponding regions of the initial image," for reducing noise in a discrete pixel image, as recited in method claim 1, and as similarly recited in system claim 36. Method claim 19 and system claim 50 more specifically recite the processing step of claim 1 and signal processing circuit of claim 36, by reciting smoothing and sharpening the structural features to enhance the dominant orientation of the structural features, and smoothing a non-structural region to enhance the homogenization of the non-structural region.

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

U.S. Patent 5,710,842 (Lee) discloses a method of enhancing an image by creating a threshold image, which is combined with the original image to provide a mask image that identifies the size, shape and location of objects.


U.S. Patent 5,978,518 (Oliyide et al.) discloses a method for enhancing a digital image, including steps of decomposing the image into low- and high-frequency images, which are modified differentially and combined to form a resulting image.

U.S. Patent 6,757,442 (Avinash) discloses an image enhancement method with simultaneous noise reduction, non-uniformity equalization and contrast enhancement, wherein separate smoothing and sharpening functions are performed on structural and non-structural regions.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas D. Lee whose telephone number is (571) 272-7436. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (7:30-5:00), alternate Fridays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David K. Moore can be reached on (571) 272-7437. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Thomas D. Lee
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2624